



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY

Founded by G. STANLEY HALL in 1887

VOL. XXII.

OCTOBER, 1911

No. 4

THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE¹

By ERNEST JONES, M. D. (London), University of Toronto

CONTENTS

I.	Introduction. Psychical determinism	477
II.	Forgetting. Errors in memory	479
III.	Lapsus linguae	492
IV.	Lapsus calami	498
V.	Misprints	503
VI.	False visual recognition	504
VII.	Mislaying of objects	506
VIII.	Erroneously carried out actions	508
IX.	Symptomatic acts	510
X.	General observations	515
	(1) Warrant for interpretations	515
	(2) Bearing on psycho-analytic method of treatment	520
	(3) Relation to health and disease	521
	(4) Determinism and free will	521
	(5) Social significance	522
XI.	Summary	526

I. INTRODUCTION

Under this title Freud has written an interesting volume² dealing with a number of mental processes that previously had received little or no attention from psychologists. The material of this kind that lends itself to study, like that of dreams, is very extensive, and is accessible to every one; it is, therefore, of importance to those who wish to test Freud's general psychological conclusions, and who have not the opportunity of investigating the more obscure problems of the psycho-neuroses. Freud's study of the mental processes in question is of especial interest as showing that mechanisms similar to those observable in the abnormal also occur in the

¹Elaborated from an address delivered before the Detroit Academy of Medicine, May 16th, 1911.

²Freud, S.: Zur Psychopathologie des Alltagslebens. Dritte Auflage, 1910.

normal; indeed from a psychological point of view these processes may be termed symptoms, although they occur in perfect health. They may be further likened to neurotic symptoms in that they represent flaws in the normal functioning of the mind.

Freud's principal thesis in this connection may be thus stated: Certain inadequacies of our mental functioning, and certain apparently purposeless performances, can be shown by means of psycho-analysis to have been determined by motives of which we were not at the time aware. The occurrences in question have the following characteristics in common: They belong to what may be called normal behavior. They are only temporary disturbances of a function which at another moment would be correctly performed. Their incorrectness is at once recognized as soon as attention is drawn to them. We can trace no motive for them at first, but always attribute them to "inattention," to "chance," and so on.

It will be seen from this that, according to Freud, our mental processes are more rigorously determined than is commonly believed, and that many of them generally thought to be causeless have in fact a very precise and definable cause. The same remark applies to many mental processes where we believe we have a perfectly free choice. A typical instance of this is afforded by the child game "think of a number." Whereas at first sight it would appear that we are free to choose any possible number, careful analysis shows, as was first pointed out by Adler¹ a few years ago, that the number actually chosen is always connected with some mental process of considerable personal significance, though this may never have been realized by the subject, and that the choice has been determined by definite preceding mental constellations. I may relate an example of this, obtained from an unbelieving acquaintance. He produced the number 986, and defied me to connect it with anything of especial interest in his mind. Using the free-association method he first recalled a memory, which had not previously been present to him, and which was to the following effect. Six years ago, on the hottest day he could remember, he had seen a joke in an evening newspaper, which stated that the thermometer had stood at 986 deg. F., evidently an exaggeration of 98.6 deg. F. We were at the time seated in front of a very hot fire, from which he had just drawn back, and he remarked, probably quite correctly, that the heat had aroused this dormant memory. However, I

¹Alfred Adler: Drei Psycho-Analysen von Zahleneinfällen und obsessierenden Zahlen. Psychiatr.-Neurol. Woch. 1905. Jahrg. VII. S. 263.

was curious to know why this memory had persisted with such vividness as to be so readily brought out, for with most people it surely would have been forgotten beyond recall, unless it had become associated with some other mental experience of more significance. He told me that on reading the joke he had laughed uproariously, and that on many subsequent occasions he had recalled it with great relish. As the joke was obviously of an exceedingly tenuous nature, this strengthened my expectation that more lay behind. His next thought was the general reflection that the conception of heat had always greatly impressed him, that heat was the most important thing in the universe, the source of all life, and so on. This remarkable attitude of a quite prosaic young man certainly needed some explanation, so I asked him to continue his free associations. The next thought was of a factory stack which he could see from his bedroom window. He often stood of an evening watching the flame and smoke issuing out of it, and reflecting on this deplorable waste of energy. Heat, flame, the source of life, the waste of vital energy issuing from an upright, hollow tube—it was not hard to divine from such associations that the ideas of heat and fire were unconsciously linked in his mind with the idea of love, as is so frequent in symbolic thinking, and that there was a strong masturbation complex present, a conclusion that he presently confirmed. His choice of the number was therefore far from being a free one, being in fact related to a very significant personal constellation.

II. FORGETTING

One of Freud's most notable contributions to psychology, and a conception fundamental in his study of the present group of mental processes, was his discovery that, in addition to the other causes of forgetting, "repression" (*Verdrängung*) plays a most important part. Others before Freud had realized the existence of this, but it was reserved for him to demonstrate the extent to which it is operative in both normal and abnormal mental life.

Freud regards repression as a biological defence-mechanism, the function of which is to guard the mind from painful experiences. He holds that there is in the mind of every one a tendency to forget the things that the person does not like to be reminded of, in other words, painful or disagreeable memories. It is true that we often remember against our will matters that we would rather forget, but there are two explanations for this. In the first place, such disagreeable haunting memories are frequently themselves only the replacements

of buried and still more disagreeable ones, with which they are associated, an occurrence allied to that concerned in the genesis of true obsessions. In the second place, the capacity to forget painful experiences is only of a certain strength, which differs greatly in different people, and is not always successful in achieving its aim. It is but rarely that one can forget the death of a dear relative, however desirable that might be, for the associative links to other conscious memories are too well formed. In such cases, what happens is that trivial memories, which by association might serve *unnecessarily* to remind us of the painful event, are apt to get forgotten, the name of the medical attendant, details as to the fatal malady, and so on; the tide of amnesia covers the base of the hill, but cannot reach the summit. By this means an economy is effected in the number of times that the painful memory is recalled to consciousness. Further, it must be remarked that, for reasons which cannot here be gone into, repression acts much more extensively in causing forgetfulness of internal, extremely intimate, and personal, mental processes than of what may be called external memories, known to the world, such as failure, grief, and so on. As is well known, Freud has applied his conception of repression to a number of other fields, notably to the explanation of infantile and hysterical amnesias,¹ which do not here concern us.

A good instance of the recognition of the part played in everyday life by repression has been furnished by Darwin, in a passage that does equal credit to his scientific honesty and his psychological acumen.² He writes, in his autobiography: "I had, during many years, followed a golden rule, namely, that whenever a published fact, a new observation or thought came across me, which was opposed to my general results, to make a memorandum of it without fail and at once; for I had found by experience that such facts and thoughts were far more apt to escape from the memory than favourable ones." Pick³ quotes a number of authors who more or less clearly recognize that a defensive striving against painful memories can lead to their becoming forgotten, but, as Freud remarks, no one has so exhaustively and at the same time so incisively described both the process itself and the psychological basis of it as has Nietzsche in his *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*; "Das habe ich getan, sagt mein Gedächtnis. Das

¹Freud: Selected Papers on Hysteria, and Three Contributions to Sexual Theory. Transl. by A. A. Brill.

²Life of Charles Darwin. Ed. by Francis Darwin. 1902. p. 42.

³Pick: Zur Psychologie des Vergessen bei Geistes- und Nervenkranken. Arch. f. Kriminal-Anthropologie u. Kriminalistik. 1905. Bd. XVIII S. 251.

kann ich nicht getan haben, sagt mein Stolz und bleibt unerbittlich. Endlich—gibt das Gedächtnis nach."

The class of forgotten thoughts in everyday life to which this mechanism applies is of course that where the other causes of forgetting do not provide adequate explanations; in other words, it principally concerns matters that we should normally expect to remember. For instance, one would expect some hidden reason in the case of the name of a near relative or friend being forgotten much more readily than in the case of a casual acquaintance. The examples of the mechanism may conveniently be divided into two groups: (1) forgetting to carry out some intended purpose (*Vergessen von Vorsätzen*), and (2) forgetting a given memory.

(1) Forgetting to carry out an intention

A field in which some counter-will frequently leads to forgetting is that regarding the making or keeping of appointments. A man unwillingly feels that he should invite a given acquaintance to a social function he is giving in the near future. He says to him, "You will be sure to come, won't you. I am not absolutely certain of the date at this moment, but I will send you a written invitation and let you know." He forgets, until it is too late, and his excessive self-reproach betrays his unconscious culpability and shows that the forgetting was not altogether an accident. Maeder¹ relates the case of a lady who forgot to keep her appointment with the dressmaker to try on her bridal gown the day before the wedding, recollecting it only at eight in the evening. One must suppose that her whole heart was not in the marriage, and in fact she has since been divorced. In my own life I have noted numerous instances of a purposeful forgetting of appointments, particularly with patients. If a given patient is very tedious and uninteresting, I am very apt to forget that I have to see him at a certain hour, and if a doctor telephones to ask me whether I can see an interesting case at that hour, I am more likely than not to tell him that I shall be free then. Indeed I can recall several annoying quandaries that this habit has led me into. One is perhaps worth repeating, as showing how complete can be the divorce between two memories when an *Unlust* motive is in action. Some years ago, when in a junior position at a certain hospital, I was asked by my chief to see his out-patients on Friday, as he wished to attend an important luncheon at the time. It was an exceptional request, for the rule was that approbation of the committee had to be obtained before a substitute was allowed to act,

¹Maeder: Contributions à la psychopathologie de la vie quotidienne. Arch. de Psychol. 1907. t. VI, p. 150.

and I gladly consented, quite forgetting that I already had at the same time an appointment which I was very desirous of keeping, and which would have been particularly inconvenient to postpone. On several occasions during the week, while going over my future engagements, I thought of both these, but never together; the thought would come, "let me see, at one on Friday I have to be at such-and-such a place," and a few hours later a similar thought would come concerning the other place. The two intentions, both of which I was anxious not to forget, were kept distinct from each other, as if in water-tight compartments. When the time came I forgot the hospital appointment, and to my intense chagrin heard that my chief was very annoyed about being called away from his luncheon on account of my apparent unpardonable remissness. At the present time my memory chiefly fails in this respect in regard to visiting patients in nursing-homes, a duty I find irksome on account of the time consumed. Often when I am busy I conveniently forget, and recently I left a patient without her daily visit for nearly a week. The self-reproach one feels on recollecting the forgotten duty on these and similar occasions is indicative of the true significance of the occurrence. This significance is intuitively realized in the case of lovers. A man who has failed to appear at a rendezvous will seek in vain to be forgiven on the plea that he had forgotten about it, will indeed with this plea only increase the lady's resentment. Even if he falls back on the customary psychological explanations, and describes how urgent business had filled his mind, he will only get as reply, "How curious that such things didn't happen last year; it only means that you think less of me." Similarly, when a man begins to be forgetful about paying accustomed attentions to his wife, overlooks her birthday, and so on, she correctly interprets it as a sign of a change in their relations.

Another field where forgetting occurs to an untoward extent is in giving, a fact that indicates a more wide-spread objection to giving than is agreeable to our altruistic conceptions. Most of those who have filled secretarial positions have been astonished to find the difficulty there is in collecting subscriptions as they fall due, and the ease with which people with otherwise good memories "overlook" such matters. It is far from rare for them even to falsify their memory, and to assert firmly that they have already paid. A few, dimly conscious of their weakness, compensate for it by forming the habit of promptly paying every bill as soon as it arrives. In general, however, there is a striking difference between the ease with which one remembers to send to the bank incoming cheques, and that with which one forgets to pay incoming bills. The

same tendency is the explanation of the constant "forgetting" to return borrowed books that seems to afflict so many people, a habit which must have distressed most people who have a good library. This observation will be confirmed by any one who has tried to establish a permanent library in an institution where many coming and going students have ready access to it.

Almost as common is the habit of forgetting to post letters. Here, also, unconscious motives can sometimes be detected in individual instances. Sometimes one leaves a letter on one's desk for several days, forgetting each time to take it with one; in such cases it may be reckoned on that there is some secret opposition to sending the given letter. In one instance of the kind I ultimately posted the letter, but forgot to address the envelope. It was returned to me through the dead letter office, I addressed it, and again posted it, but this time without a stamp. I was then forced to recognize that there was in me an unconscious opposition to the sending of the letter, one of which I had previously been unaware, but which manifested itself in external inhibitions. One does not forget to post a letter that one's mind is in full harmony about sending; for instance, a love letter. One is more apt to forget to send a letter containing a cheque than one containing an account. Often the resistance is of a general order. Thus a busy man forgets to post letters entrusted to him—to his slight annoyance—by his wife, just as he may "forget" to carry out her shopping orders. Inhibitions of this kind sometimes betray a veiled antagonism towards the person whose behests we forget to fulfil. They constitute a way of depreciating the importance of the other person for ourselves, and when pronounced in general they indicate a lack of consideration for others, based on an excessive self-absorption or abnormally high self-estimation.

In examples similar to these preceding the counter-impulse that inhibits the memory is as a rule directed immediately against the conscious intention. In a more complicated series of cases, which the Germans term *Fehlleistungen*, it is directed against some other mental process, which, however, stands in associative relation to it; this mental process is, so to speak, symbolized in the conscious intention. The following are two examples of the kind. Maeder¹ relates the case of a hospital interne who had an important business appointment in the town, but who was not allowed to leave the hospital until his chief, who was out for the evening, returned. He decided to leave his post, nevertheless, and on getting

¹Maeder: *Une voie nouvelle en psychologie; Freud et son école.* Coenobium. Gennaio 1909. Anno. III. p. 100.

back late in the evening, was astonished to find he had left the light burning in his room, a thing he had never done before during his two years of service. He at once perceived the reason for his omission; his chief always passed by the window on his way to his own house, would see the light burning and conclude that the assistant was at home. The cause for the inhibition having passed, the subject readily appreciated it. A patient of mine on a number of occasions made the remarkable omission of forgetting to shave the right side of his face. It was always the same side, and it was the one that was turned towards me during the treatment. Analysis of the occurrence showed that it was determined by a number of unconscious processes, of which the following was one. The idea of hair was connected with various sexual ideas, and the non-shaving of the side turned to me symbolized a disinclination to lay bare his sexual life, the occurrence always synchronizing in fact with an outburst of resistance against the treatment.

2. Forgetting a given memory

We are concerned only with striking lapses in memory, namely, regarding matters that as a rule we can easily recall. An instance, which is hard to credit, though I can vouch for the accuracy of it, was related to me by a medical friend. His wife was seriously ill with some obscure abdominal malady, and, while anxiously pondering over the possible nature of it, he remarked to her, "It is comforting to think that there has been no tuberculosis in your family." She turned to him very astonished, and said "Have you forgotten that my mother died of tuberculosis, and that my sister recovered from it only after having been given up by the doctors?" His anxiety lest the obscure symptoms should prove to be tubercular had made him forget a piece of knowledge that was thoroughly familiar to him. Those accustomed to psycho-analysis will surmise that there is more to be said about the matter, but the example will serve to illustrate the influence affective processes have in connection with forgetting.

It is with proper names that one observes the most striking instances of this process. In the majority of cases the counter-will that prevents a familiar name from being recalled is directed against some mental process that is associated with the one to be recalled, rather than against this itself. On account of some disagreeable experience we would rather not recall a given name; we may actually succeed in forgetting it, but more often the tendency is shown indirectly in our being unable to recall other names resembling it and which

might bring the undesired one to our mind. In other words, we have to think of the undesired name at times, but we guard ourselves against doing so more often than is necessary. A hospital interne got to know a nurse, whom he of course addressed by her surname, and in his work saw her daily for about a year. They later got more intimate and he now experienced great difficulty in recalling her surname so as to address envelopes to her. On one occasion he was unable to write to her for three weeks; recourse to her letters was of no use, for she always signed only her Christian name in them. Investigation of the matter brought to light the fact that her Christian name was the same as that of a girl he had previously jilted, and also of another girl he had been passionately in love with throughout his boyhood. This name he could not forget. What had happened was that he had successively transferred his affections from one girl to the other, the three being unconsciously identified in his mind. He was thus always true to his love, and did not wish to recall any fact, such as the different surname, that would tend to remind him of his faithlessness. The surnames in no way resembled one another.

Brill¹ relates the following example from his own experience. When working at Zurich he wished to recall the name of an old patient of his, on whose case he had specially worked for some months, but was totally unable to do so. He had painstakingly prepared an account of the case for publication, but at the last moment his chief intervened, and decided to report it before a local society. He was unexpectedly prevented from doing so, and Brill was sent to read the paper at the meeting, this being credited to the chief. In trying to recall his patient's name, the name of another patient, Appenzeller, who was suffering from the same disease, persistently presented itself. In the psycho-analysis undertaken one apparently irrelevant memory kept recurring over and over again. This was an actual scene, in which the chief in question had aimed with a shot-gun at a rabbit, and had missed, to the amusement of Brill and the bystanders. The sought for name ultimately flashed up—Lapin (rabbit), the patient being a French-Canadian. The example is instructive in illustrating the associative replacement-formations that come to the mind instead of the proper memory. The sound of the first part of Appenzeller's name resembles the French pronunciation of Lapin, and the scene that kept recurring, the failure of the chief to bag the rabbit, symbolized the whole incident that was the cause of the inhibition.

¹A. A. Brill: A Contribution to the Psychopathology of Everyday Life. Psychotherapy, 1909. p. 9.

The following instance is rather more complex, but shows how fine are the threads connecting unconscious mental processes. A lady was unable to recall the Christian name of a near friend. The full name was Isabell Brown, but she could only recall the surname; instead of the other the name Isidore presented itself, to be at once rejected as incorrect. Thus the failure in memory consisted only in the replacement of the syllable Bell by Dore. I asked her to associate to the word Brown, and the two names Owlie and Leen at once came to her mind. It will be noticed that the first two letters of the first word and the last one of the second word are contained in Brown; the only foreign ones in each case form the syllable "ly" in pronunciation, a fact to be borne in mind. The two words were pet names of two common friends, who used to live together with the subject, and it was in their company that she used to see Miss Brown. Concerning the first one she said that she was at present pregnant for the first time, and that she was anxious as to the outcome, because certain characteristics in her figure had led her to suspect that pelvic narrowing might give rise to difficulties in the confinement. She also mentioned another friend, Dora D., who had similar characteristics, and Isadora D., a famous dancer, whom she knew personally, and whose perfect figure she greatly admired. The name Isidore, which it will be remembered was the replacement-memory, reminded her of the poem by Edgar Allan Poe, Beautiful Isidore *Lee* (*ly*). I told her that the correct name of the poem was Beautiful Annabel Lee; some inhibition was therefore acting against the syllables Anna and Bell. Thought of the name Annabel brought to her mind the name of Owlie's sister Annie Sybil, which is a sound-contraction of Anna Isabell, and at once Miss Brown's proper name Isabell, which I personally did not know, came to her mind. The subject had recently had a painful quarrel with Annie Sybil, in which also the latter's sister had unfortunately become involved; she had always thought it a pity that the sister she disliked had a better figure, and was more suited for matrimony, than the one she was so fond of. There were thus two painful thoughts at the bottom of the amnesia, one the anxiety about Owlie's confinement, and the other that in this respect the disliked sister was more favorably situated.

The names first recalled by the subject, namely, Isidore Brown, one incorrect, the other correct, were both directly associated to the syllable "ly." The suppressed syllable was "Bell." In view of the fact that the word "belly" summarized the whole situation, it is difficult to avoid the inference that the amnesia for the syllable "Bell" had thus

proceeded: One must suppose that the thought of Miss Isabell Brown had unconsciously reminded the patient of their common friend and her sister; the diphthong in the surname further is identical with that in the former's name, Owlie, and the Christian name resembles the second part of the latter's name, Annie Sybil. The first part of the latter name, Annie, reminded her of "Beautiful Annabel Lee," making the word "belly" which symbolized the painful thoughts in question. These thoughts nevertheless came to expression in the false replacement-memory. First the accent was shifted from the first syllable, "bell," of the objectionable word to the second, "ly," which was also the second syllable of Owlie's name. This, however, was unsuitable for forming a name by being added to the remembered part "Isi," so that a further shifting took place in which it was replaced by "dore." Dora was the name of a friend with similar characteristics to Owlie's, but in combination with "Isi" it was the name of another person, Isadora D., who was strikingly free from them. The subject, therefore, invests her friend with the beautiful and healthy attributes of the famous dancer. One might even go farther and surmise that the reason why Dore had appeared rather than Dora was because the word "door," which is constantly used symbolically for any exit (for instance, of the body, as in the Song of Songs) was better adapted to symbolize the suppressed complex than the word Dora is. To many readers this reconstruction will probably appear as too fine-spun. In my opinion, however, they underestimate the combination of delicacy and rigor with which unconscious and foreconscious processes are determined, a conclusion which can readily be confirmed by a pains-taking study of similar material.¹

A simple illustration of the way in which a strong affect will cleave to a name, and be transferred to any other person bearing the same or similar name, is afforded by Shakspere in Julius Cæsar (Act. III Sc. 3):

First Citizen. Your name, sir, truly.

Cinna. Truly, my name is Cinna.

First Citizen. Tear him in pieces, he's a conspirator.

Cinna. I am Cinna the poet; I am not Cinna the conspirator.

Second Citizen. It is no matter; his name's Cinna; pluck but his name out of his heart, and turn him going.

A field in which significance is apt to be intuitively attributed to the forgetting of names, is that where our own are for-

¹In the Zentralbl. f. Psychoanalyse, Jahrg. 1, Heft 9, this analysis is carried to a farther stage.

gotten. Few people can avoid feeling a twinge of resentment when they find that their name has been forgotten, particularly if it is by some one with whom they had hoped or expected it would be remembered. They instinctively realize that if they had made a greater impression on the person's mind he would certainly have remembered them again, for the name is an integral part of the personality. Similarly, few things are more flattering to most people than to find themselves addressed by name by a great personage where they could hardly have anticipated it. Napoleon, like most leaders of men, was a master of this art. In the midst of the disastrous Campaign of France, in 1814, he gave an amazing proof of his memory in this direction. When in a town near Craonne he recollects that he had met the mayor, De Bussy, over twenty years ago in the La Fère regiment; the delighted De Bussy at once threw himself into his service with extraordinary zeal. Conversely there is no surer way of affronting some one than by pretending to forget his name; the insinuation is thus conveyed that the person is so unimportant in our eyes that we cannot be bothered to remember his name. This device is often exploited in literature. In Turgenev's *Smoke* (p. 255) the following passage occurs. "'So you still find Baden entertaining, M'sieu—Litvinov.' Ratmirov always uttered Litvinov's surname with hesitation, every time, as though he had forgotten it, and could not at once recall it. In this way, as well as by the lofty flourish of his hat in saluting him, he meant to insult his pride." The same author in his *Fathers and Children* (p. 107) writes, "The Governor invited Kirsanov and Bazarov to his ball, and within a few minutes invited them a second time, regarding them as brothers, and calling them Kisarov." Here the forgetting that he had spoken to them, the mistake in the names, and the inability to distinguish between the two young men, constitute a culmination of disparagement.¹ Falsification of a name has the same significance as forgetting it; it is only a step towards complete amnesia. The word-contamination in this instance shows a striking psychological intuition of the process termed by Freud "identification;" it indicated that in the Governor's eyes the characteristics of the young men were so little marked, and the men so unimportant, that he did not think it worth while to make the effort of differentiating one from the other. Sensitiveness about the correct

¹In literature disparagement is often indicated by the forgetting of other matters besides names. Thus in Bernard Shaw's "*Cæsar and Cleopatra*," Cæsar's indifference to Cleopatra is depicted by his being vexed, on leaving Egypt, at having forgotten something he has to do; finally he recollects what it is—to say Good-bye to Cleopatra.

spelling of one's name is extremely frequent; we all know the profound difference that members of Scottish clans see between Mc and Mac, and a practical psychologist realizes the importance of being sound on the matter every time he writes such a name. I had thought personally that I was free from such sensitiveness until a little occurrence some time ago taught me the contrary. An article of mine had been published in a German journal; only my surname was printed, with the letters M. D. (which are not used professionally in Germany) attached, as if they were the initials. The same morning I had occasion to fill up a lunacy certificate, and was surprised at the secretary laughing when I handed it in; I had signed it with my Christian name only, thus compensating for the omission in the article. This sensitiveness has sometimes deeper roots than mere personal self-esteem; Stekel¹ has traced it to infantile complexes relating to the giver of the name—the father.

The following two instances in my own experience are similar to those quoted from Turgenev. The first relates to Mr. Mayo Robson, the eminent gastro-intestinal surgeon, after whom was named a bobbin he had invented for the operation of entero-anastomosis. Another surgeon, almost equally eminent in the same field of work, and living in the same town, remarked one day in a lofty and contemptuous manner, "This patient had previously been unsuccessfully operated on by a man called Rayo Bobson, or Bayo Dobson, or some such name." His motive was evident, and, of course, quite conscious. In the second instance the mistake in the name was quite unconsciously made as the result of a falsification of memory, but the significance was very similar. It was at a university graduation ceremony, where a number of visitors were present arrayed in multi-colored and imposing robes. Those so attired formed a procession in double file. A friend of mine, a foreigner, remarked as Professor Titchener passed, "Let me see, who is that? Is n't it Kitchener?" Many would be inclined to see no significance in the mistake, although my friend knew the names of Lord Kitchener and Professor Titchener fairly well. I have, however, to add these two additional facts. A few minutes before, while talking about experimental psychologists in general, he allowed himself to make the scurrilous remark that in his opinion they should be called the pantry-cooks of psychology on account

¹Stekel: Warum sie den eigenen Namen hassen. *Zentralbl. f. Psychoanalyse*, Jahrg. 1, Heft 3, S. 109. See also his article, *Die Verpflichtung des Namens*. *Zeitschr. f. Psychother. u. med. Psychol.* Feb., 1911. Bd. III. S. 11c.

of their menial field of work; the passage from "cook" to "kitchen" is obvious. Secondly he had also commented on the martial appearance of this dazzling procession, and I can readily imagine his being especially struck by Professor Titchener's soldierly bearing. It is difficult to avoid the inference that these two trends of thought, present in his mind so recently, played their part in the falsification of the name, which thus betrayed his private opinion of the field of work in which Professor Titchener¹ is so eminent.

Many people have a strikingly bad memory for names, even when their memory is otherwise good. This is generally explained by saying that proper names are among the latest acquired knowledge, so that our memory of them is especially fragile; in accordance with the law of dissolution these memories are among the first to be lost, a process that constitutes one of the most characteristic signs of approaching senility. This explanation is difficult to harmonize with two facts, first that in many cases the memory is weak in this connection when it is notably good in regard to other more complex and later acquired matters, such as scientific formulæ, and so on, and secondly that the characteristic in question is much more pronounced with some people than with others. When the opportunity of making a psycho-analysis with some one of this type presents itself two other matters are brought to light with considerable constancy, namely, that for various reasons the person's own name has acquired an unusual psychical significance, so that it becomes invested with the feeling-tone of the whole personality, and that there is a strong ego-complex present. It would seem, therefore, that the general inability to bear other people's names in mind is an expression of an excessively high estimation of the importance of one's own name and of oneself in general, with a corresponding indifference to or depreciation of other people. In my own experience I have most often found this characteristic with people having either an extremely common or an extremely rare name, both contingencies leading to undue sensitiveness in the matter, but I cannot put this forward as being a general rule. It further seems to me probable that the increasing difficulty of retaining names that is such a frequent accompaniment of advancing years, may in part at least be attributed to the growing self-esteem brought by success and by cessation from the turmoils and conflicts of youth.

¹I trust that Mr. Robson and Professor Titchener will pardon my sacrificing the personal privacy of their names in the cause of science. I have purposely selected, from a large number of similar instances, two in which the contrast between a rare individual disparagement and an otherwise universal respect is especially striking.

Falsification of memory, as was indicated above, is closely related to forgetting, and is influenced by the same motive. A common instance is the mistakes made with regard to the day of the week. Some one who is eagerly anticipating an event at the end of the week is very apt to think it is Wednesday when it is only Tuesday, and so on; their impatience at the slowness with which the week is passing manifests itself as an error—in the desired direction—as to the present date.

Other mental operations, besides recollecting, may be falsified in the same way, a process designated by Freud as an "*Irrtum*." Several examples related elsewhere in this paper might be classified in this group, so that one here will suffice. I was buying some flowers, and put two dollars, the exact price of them, on the counter. While they were being got ready, I changed my mind about one bunch, and told the woman serving me to leave it out; it should be said that she was the owner of the shop. On taking the money a few moments later she said, "that bunch cost forty cents, so that will make two dollars forty." Her wish that I were making the order larger instead of smaller was probably concerned in the mistake.

A few concluding remarks may be added on this mechanism of forgetting. The main points may be summarized in the statements that forgetting is often determined by a painful mental process (*Unlust*) of which the subject is unaware, either at the time only or permanently; that this inhibiting mental process may be a counter-will to recollecting the matter in question or may be associated to this in a more complex way; and that a false memory presenting itself in the place of the true is a symbolic substitute of this, standing in associative connection with it. Two general considerations indicate that acts of forgetting, of the type illustrated above, are not, as is commonly supposed, accidental or due to chance. First is the fact that the same one tends to be repeated. If we forget to carry out a given intention, or are unable to recall a given name, the failure is apt to recur, thus suggesting that it has a specific cause. Secondly is the fact that in at least two spheres of life it is universally recognized that remembering is under control of the will, so that a failure to remember is regarded as synonymous with a not wanting to remember. Freud¹ writes: "Frauendienst wie Militärdienst erheben den Anspruch, dass alles zu ihnen Gehörige dem Vergessen entrückt sein müsse, und erwecken so die Meinung, Vergessen sei zulässig bei unwichtigen Dingen, während es bei wichtigen Dingen ein Anzeichen davon sei, dass man sie wie

¹Freud: *Op. cit.*, S. 83.

unwichtige behandeln wolle, ihnen also die Wichtigkeit abspreche." A soldier who forgets to perform a given duty is punished regardless of the excuse. He is not allowed to forget, and whether his not wanting to perform the duty is openly expressed, or indirectly, as by his forgetting, is considered by his officer as comparatively irrelevant. The standard set by women is equally severe; a lover who forgets his lady's wishes is treated as though he openly declared them unimportant.

III. LAPSUS LINGUÆ

The everyday occurrence of the defect in psycho-physical functioning popularly known as a slip of the tongue has not received much attention from psychologists. The attempts made, by Meringer and Mayer and others, to explain on phonetic grounds the particular mistake made have signally failed, for on the one hand many cases are to be observed where no phonetic factors are in operation, and on the other hand careful study shows that such factors are at the most accessory or adjuvant in nature, and are never the essential cause.

According to Freud the word said in mistake is a manifestation of a second suppressed thought, and thus arises outside the train of thought that the speaker is intending to express. It may be a word, or phrase, entirely foreign to this train of thought, being taken in its entirety from the outlying thought, or it may be a compromise-formation, in which both come to expression. In the latter case the false word may be a neologism; a common example of this is where a speaker, intending to use the word "aggravating," says "How very aggravoking," the word "provoking" having intruded itself; many malapropisms are formed in this way, being the result of uncertainty as to which is the most appropriate word.

The secondary thought that thus obstrudes itself on the intended speech may, like the motives of repressive forgetting, be of two kinds: (1) a general counter-impulse (*Gegenwillen*) directed immediately against the speech, or (2) another thought accidentally aroused by it. In the latter case it can represent either a continuation of a theme previously in the speaker's mind, or a thought aroused, through a superficial association, by the theme that is intended to be spoken; even when it represents a continuation of a previous theme it will generally, if not always, be found that there is some association between this and the theme of the speech. It will readily be understood that in many cases the disturbing thought is not evident, but can be revealed only by investigation, sometimes a searching psycho-analysis being necessary.

Cases where the disturbing thought is a direct counter-impulse are usually easy to interpret. One instance will suffice. A President of the Austrian Reichstag finished his introductory remarks by declaring the session closed, instead of opened; as the particular session promised nothing but fruitless wrangles, one can sympathize with his wish that it were already at an end.

Some cases where the disturbing thought is nearly related to the intended theme are equally simple. A French governess in Dr. Stekel's family¹ asked his wife that she might retain her testimonials, saying: "Je cherche encore pour les après-midis, pardon, pour les avant-midis." The slip betrayed her feeling of dissatisfaction with the afternoon engagement, and her intention to look for another situation for the afternoons as well as the mornings, an intention she proceeded to carry out.

A friend of mine was driving his motor-car slowly and cautiously one day, when a cyclist, who was riding with his head down, furiously, and on the wrong side of the street, ran into him and damaged his bicycle. He sent in a bill for \$50.00, and, as my friend refused to pay, he sued him in court. When I enquired as to the result of the action my friend said, "the judge reprimanded the prisoner for careless riding." I corrected him, "You mean the plaintiff, not the prisoner." "Well," he replied, "I think the fellow should have been arrested for furious riding."

A lady when speaking of Bernard Shaw's works said to me, "I think very highly of all my writings," instead of "all his writings." She was an amateur writer of short stories.

An unmarried man, a patient, remarked, "my father was devoted to my wife." He meant, of course, either "his wife" or "my mother." This is a typical instance of a lapsus that would pass as being entirely accidental and devoid of significance. I must add, however, that one of the main causes of the patient's neurosis was an unconscious incestuous attachment to his mother, so that his unsuppressed thoughts on the subject of the remark would run in full, "My attitude towards my mother is the same as that of my father." No alteration is too slight to have a meaning. The instance narrated above, in which the first letter only of Titchener's name was replaced by a K,² belongs to the subject of lapsus linguae equally as much as to that of forgetting.

¹Related by Freud. *Op. cit.* S. 48.

²This replacing of the initial letter of a word by that of another word, typically from the same sentence, is known in Oxford as a Spoonerism, on account of a distinguished professor who had the habit of committing the particular slip.

Such self-betrayals as those just related sometimes afford valuable insight into character and motive. I was present at the International Congress in Amsterdam when the following curious episode occurred. There was a heated discussion regarding Freud's theory of hysteria. One of the most violent opponents, who is noted as having worked long and fruitlessly on the subject of hysteria, was grudgingly admitting the value of the earlier work of Breuer and Freud—the conclusions of which he had himself discovered to be true—as a prelude to a vehement denunciation of the dangerous tendencies of Freud's later work. During his speech he twice said, "Breuer and *ich* haben bekanntlich nachgewiesen," thus replacing Freud's name by his own, and revealing his envy of Freud's originality.

The following example is more complicated. In talking of the financial standards so prevalent in modern civilization I said, "In yesterday's newspaper there were the headings 'Ten million dollar fire in Halifax; six lives lost.'" It was at once pointed out to me that I had said Halifax instead of Bangor, Maine. Analysis brought the following free associations. Until a few years ago I was disgracefully ignorant of the existence of Bangor, Maine, and I remember in college days being puzzled by the reference to Maine in the well-known student song "Riding down from Bangor," as in my ignorance I supposed that this related to Bangor, the university town of Carnarvonshire, Wales. The name Bangor essentially stands in my mind for the original Bangor. It brought up a memory of the recent controversy as to whether the new National Welsh Library should be established at Bangor, at Swansea (my home), or at Cardiff (the university town where I studied). This reminded me of interests I have in the contents of this library, in Celtic mythology, which naturally carried me to the valuable library of mythological books that I possess myself. Then I remembered that what had especially struck me in reading about the recent fire was the fact that a valuable collection of books had been destroyed in it, and that this had made me enter a note not to forget to renew my fire insurance, which had recently lapsed, before leaving in the coming week for a fortnight's visit to the United States.

The meaning of my lapsus is beginning to emerge. A library fire at Bangor was too near home for my peace of mind, and my unconscious had consolingly relegated it to some other spot. The next problem is to discover the motive for the replacement of Bangor by Halifax, a process that was greatly "over-determined." Maine is from its geographical position closely associated in my mind with the Maritime

Provinces of Canada, and only on the preceding day a Canadian had been demonstrating to me on a map, for the *n*th time, how Maine should rightfully have formed part of these Provinces. Still that does not explain why I selected Halifax rather than St. John, the other town I know the name of in the Maritime Provinces. One reason doubtless was the fact that at the time I was treating a patient from Halifax, Nova Scotia, who had recently been telling me that the houses there were mostly built of wood, and therefore were exposed to the danger of fire. The name Halifax, however, is better known to me as an English euphemism for Hell, as in the expression, "Go to Hal-ifax." This called up the memory of half-forgotten childhood fears, for, like most Welsh children, I was carefully nurtured with a proper dread of what was called "the burning fire;" as I grew up I was comforted to learn the groundlessness of this particular dread. My slip of the tongue, therefore, registered my desire that any library fire should be in some other place than in my home, and if possible in a non-existent locality.¹

An example, for which I am indebted to Dr. A. A. Brill, is peculiar in that the slip of the tongue represented a resolution in opposition to the conscious intention. A man, who on account of homosexual practices was in constant fear of coming into conflict with the law, invited two lady friends to spend an evening at the theatre. They expressed a wish to see a play called "Alias Jimmy Valentine," which deals largely with convicts and prisons. He was far from comfortable at the idea of spending an evening with such thoughts, but could not well avoid it. On getting into the cab to drive to the theatre, however, he accidentally gave the driver the name of another theatre, and did not notice the mistake until they arrived there, when it was too late to rectify it. At this theatre the play was about the cleverness with which a daughter outwitted her selfish old father. It was not without significance that the subject's attitude towards his own father was one of pronounced hostility, so that his slip of the tongue had the effect of exchanging an evening with a painful topic for one with a topic that he greatly enjoyed.

Several non-scientific writers before Freud had noted the psychological significance of accidental slips of the tongue. Freud² quotes examples of this from, for instance, Brantôme and Wallenstein. Shakspere himself furnishes a beautiful one in the Merchant of Venice (Act. III Sc. 2). It occurs in the scene where Portia is expressing her anxiety lest the fa-

¹This analysis led further into previously unconscious thoughts, which are too intimate for me to describe here.

²Freud: *Op. cit.*, S. 50, 58.

vored suitor should fare as badly as the distasteful ones in the hazard set for them by her father. She wants to tell Bassanio that in the event of his failure she would nevertheless belong to him, but is prevented by her promise to her father. In this mental discord she speaks:—

There is something tells me (but it is not love),
I would not lose you; and you know yourself
Hate counsels not in such a quality.
But lest you should not understand me well,
(And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought)
I would detain you here a month or two,
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but then I am forsworn;
So will I never be; so may you miss me;
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'erlooked me, and divided me:
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,—
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours.

Rank¹ comments on this passage: "Gerade das, was sie ihm also bloss leise andeuten möchte, weil sie es eigentlich ihm überhaupt verschweigen sollte, dass sie nämlich schon vor der Wahl ganz die seine sei und ihn liebe, das lässt der Dichter mit bewundernswertem psychologischem Feingefühl in dem Versprechen sich offen durchdrängen und weiss durch diesen Kunstgriff die unerträgliche Ungewissheit des Liebenden sowie die gleichgestimmte Spannung des Zuhörers über den Ausgang der Wahl zu beruhigen."

Our greatest novelist, George Meredith, in his masterpiece, *The Egoist*, shows an even finer understanding of the mechanism. The plot of the novel is, shortly, as follows: Sir Wiloughby Patterne, an aristocrat greatly admired by his circle, becomes engaged to a Miss Constantia Durham. She discovers in him an intense egoism, which he skilfully conceals from the world, and, to escape the marriage, she elopes with a Captain Oxford. Some years later Patterne becomes engaged to a Miss Clara Middleton, and most of the book is taken up with a detailed description of the conflict that arises in her mind on also discovering his egoism. External circumstances, and her conception of honor, hold her to her pledge, while he becomes more and more distasteful in her eyes. She partly confides in his cousin and secretary, Vernon Whitford, the man whom she ultimately marries, but, from a mixture of motives, he stands aloof.

¹Otto Rank: *Zentralbl. f. Psychoanalyse*. Heft 3, S. 110.

In a soliloquy Clara speaks as follows: "If some noble gentleman could see me as I am and not disdain to aid me! Oh! to be caught out of this prison of thorns and brambles. I cannot tear my own way out. I am a coward. A beckoning of a finger would change me, I believe. I could fly bleeding and through hootings to a comrade. . . . Constantia met a soldier. Perhaps she prayed and her prayer was answered. She did ill. But, oh, how I love her for it. His name was Harry Oxford. . . . She did not waver, she cut the links, she signed herself over. O brave girl, what do you think of me? But I have no Harry Whitford, I am alone" "the sudden consciousness that she had put another name for Oxford, struck her a buffet, drowning her in crimson."

The fact that both men's names end in "ford" evidently renders the confounding of them more easy, and would by many be regarded as an adequate cause for this, but the real underlying motive for it is plainly indicated by the author. In another passage the same lapsus occurs, and is followed by the hesitation and change of subject that one is familiar with in psycho-analysis when a half-conscious complex is touched. Sir Willoughby patronizingly says of Whitford: "False alarm. The resolution to do anything unaccustomed is quite beyond poor old Vernon." Clara replies: "But if Mr. Oxford—Whitford . . . your swans coming sailing up the lake, how beautiful they look when they are indignant.¹ I was going to ask you, surely men witnessing a marked admiration for some one else will naturally be discouraged?" "Sir Willoughby stiffened with sudden enlightenment."

In still another passage Clara by another lapsus betrays her secret wish that she was on a more intimate footing with Vernon Whitford. Speaking to a boy friend she says: "Tell Mr. Vernon—tell Mr. Whitford."

In relation to these two literary passages I made a personal slip of the tongue that illustrates the probity of the unconscious mind as contrasted with the duplicity of the conscious one. Expounding the subject of lapsus linguae to some one I said that I had come across two interesting literary examples, in Meredith's *Egoist* and in Shakspere's *Love's Labour Lost*; when detailing the second I noticed that I had named the wrong play. Analysis of the mistake brought the following memories. On the preceding day, while talking of the sources of Shakspere's plots, I had made the remark that the only one he had not taken from previous authors was that con-

¹The nature of the change of the subject here accurately betrays the content of the underlying affect, *indignation* at Patterne's disparagement of Whitford, just as a mediate association reaction indicates the nature of the complex stimulated.

tained in Love's Labour Lost. Some six months before, Professor Freud had told me that he had heard from Dr. Otto Rank that there was in the Merchant of Venice an example of lapsus linguae attributed to the disturbing influence of a suppressed thought, but he could not tell me where it occurred. On looking back I realize that I felt just a touch of pique, though I did not pay any attention to it at the time, at not having observed it myself, and took the first opportunity to re-read the play, when of course I came across the example. The one in the Egoist I had really observed myself. My statement that I had discovered the two examples in question was therefore only three parts true. The fact, which I had suppressed,¹ that Dr. Rank deserved some credit, leaked through to external expression in my error of naming the wrong play, substituting Shakspere's only original one. An interesting feature of the example is the fact that a few minutes before I had been relating how a man not over-scrupulous in the matter of priority had betrayed his dishonesty in a treacherous slip of the tongue. No doubt deeper factors than interest in scientific priority were also operative in my own case, such as rivalry and an "English" complex, both of which are matters that play a very subordinate part in my conscious mental life.

IV. LAPSUS CALAMI

The introductory remarks made on the subject of slips of the tongue apply almost literally to slips of the pen. One principal difference is that the delay interposed by the mechanical acts of writing enables disturbances of co-ordination to occur with especial readiness, as can be illustrated by a glance over any author's manuscript. The necessity for numerous corrections indicates that, whether owing to the intricacy of the subject-matter or to a lack of clearness in the author's mind, a harmonious flow is far from being attained. General perplexities mirror themselves in half-conscious hesitations as to the choice of individual words. Thus, a correspondent, who couldn't decide as to the advisability of a given proposal, wrote to me that it might turn out to be "unpracticable," evidently a contamination of "impracticable" and "unpractical."

A field of frequent errors is that of dates. Many people continue to write the date of the previous year throughout a great part of January. Not all such mistakes are due to the fixation of habit, as is readily assumed; sometimes they signify a disinclination to accept the fact that yet another by-gone

¹Naturally I excused this to myself on the ground that pedantic accuracy is uncalled for in conversation; but the facts remain.

year has brought them nearer to old age, a reflection that is apt to be prevalent at the turn of the year. Regrets that such and such a date is already past, or impatience that it has not yet arrived, are common motives of such unconscious mistakes. A student dated a letter to me April 11, 1911, instead of April 22. An examination was due in the first week of May for which he was very unprepared, and I attributed his slip to the wish that there was twice as much time ahead of him in which to get ready. That the date he actually wrote was the 11th was no doubt influenced by the presence of these ciphers at the end of 1911, but it is to be noted even in this connection that his mistake consisting in writing them earlier than he should, *i. e.*, in putting the date earlier. As with the phonetic factors entering into slips of the tongue, the fact that the part wrongly written occurs elsewhere in the same line only predisposes to the mistake; such factors do not cause the mistake, they only make it easier to assume that particular form.

For the following example I am indebted to Dr. A. A. Brill. A patient wrote to him on the subject of his sufferings, which he tried to attribute to worry about his financial affairs induced by a cotton crisis: "my trouble is all due to that damned frigid wave;¹ there is n't even any seed." What he really wrote, however, was not "wave" but "wife." In the bottom of his heart he cherished half-avowed reproaches against his wife, on account of her sexual anaesthesia and childlessness, and he dimly realized, with right, that his life of enforced abstinence played an important part in the genesis of his symptoms.

As with slips of the tongue, no mistake is too slight to be significant. The following four are instances, selected from a considerable number of similar ones, in which it consisted only in the replacement of one letter by another.

A correspondent of mine had published a scientific paper on a sexual subject, and was writing to me about a virulent criticism of it that had appeared; the critic had used such passionately denunciatory language as to make it evident that the topic of the paper had aroused some strong personal complex. My correspondent's first sentence was "Have you seen X's satirical criticism of my paper?", plainly indicating by his unconscious substitution of "y" for "i" his estimate of the nature of the criticism.

Some two years ago I was writing to an old friend, whom I had always called by his surname. On account of family ties it became more appropriate to address him by his Christian

¹Meaning in the money-market.

name, and, after a momentary embarrassment natural under the circumstances, I took up my pen and began, "Dear Fred." To my amazement, however, I saw that I had slipped in a "u" before the final letter of the name. This may seem a very trivial mistake, and due to the similarity of the two words, but a psycho-analytic conscience tends to be more unsparing in the criticism of its owner, as it is more sparing in that of others. Two memories at once rushed to my mind. One was of a dream I had had two years before, at a time when I was debating with myself whether it would be politic openly to defend the Freudian principles, the truth of which my experience had made me accept. In the dream I was in a swiftly-moving motor-omnibus, the driver of which was a composite figure (*Sammelperson*),¹ bearing mostly the lineaments of my friend. An angry crowd surrounded us, and threatened the driver for "going so fast." It became necessary for me to decide whether to stand aloof or to side with the driver, and I did the latter. I need not give the other details of the dream, but the analysis showed it to be a presentation of my waking dilemma, the driver being a replacement-figure for Professor Freud. I had recently been taken for a long motor ride by my friend, who by the way has a German surname, and though at first I had qualms as to the recklessness of his driving I soon perceived, to my relief, that this was only apparent and that he was really an exceedingly skilful and reliable driver. Before the incident of the *lapsus calami*, therefore, he had long been unconsciously associated in my mind with Professor Freud. The second memory was of a letter I had recently written to a Canadian Professor of a subject allied to my own. On coming to Canada I had felt very awkward and constrained at the American custom of formally prefacing a man's title to his name when addressing him, and it was a long time before I got accustomed to being spoken to by both younger and older colleagues as Dr. Jones or as Doctor. It embarrassed me to have to speak to even fairly intimate friends in this way, and in the case of the gentleman in question I frankly told him, in the letter referred to above, that my English prejudices would not let me do it with any degree of comfort. As he was some fifteen years older than myself I wondered afterwards whether he might resent a younger man taking the initiative of addressing him simply by his surname. The slip of the pen now began to take on a different aspect, and I was obliged to recognize in it the manifestation of a snobbish wish that I was on sufficiently close personal terms with Professor Freud to allow such a

¹See *Amer. Journ. of Psychol.*, April, 1910, p. 287.

familiar mode of address. I feel certain that no thought of the kind had ever entered my consciousness, to which it is quite strange, though my intense reaction of shame convinced me of the reality of its existence. The circumstances of the slip of the pen were extraordinarily favorable to its occurrence, the similarity in the names, the previous identification of the men, the occasion of the letter following so soon after the other one, and so on. If it were not for this, I hardly think that such a deeply repressed wish could have come to expression, at least not so flagrantly.

I am indebted to Dr. A. A. Brill for the following personal example. Although by custom a strict teetotaler, he yielded to a friend's importunity one evening, in order to avoid offending him, and took a little wine. During the next morning an exacerbation of an eye-strain headache gave him cause to regret this slight indulgence, and his reflections on the subject found expression in the following slip of the pen. Having occasion to write the name of a girl mentioned by a patient he wrote not Ethel but Ethyl.¹ It happened that the girl in question was rather too fond of drink, and in Dr. Brill's² mood at the time this characteristic of hers stood out with conspicuous significance.

Some three years ago I was writing to a friend in England, and gave the letter to a member of my family to post. Fortunately she noticed I had made a mistake in the address, having written as the street number 19 instead of 55. The two numbers do not even resemble each other, so that the customary explanations are here more than ever in default. I will relate a few of the associations as they occurred. The name of the street, Gordon St., brought "Gordon Highlanders—the Highlands—the thought that my friend is an ardent mountaineer—the thought that Professor Freud is very fond of the mountains—*Berg* (=Mountain)—Berggasse, the street in Vienna in which Professor Freud lives—the number of his house, 19." The friend's name, Morris brought "morris-dancers—maypole—phallus—sex—Professor Freud's works on sexual subjects." In desperation I started again with Gordon, which now brought "the regiment called the Gay Gordons—gay women (the London euphemism for prostitutes)—the

¹Ethyl alcohol is of course the chemical name for ordinary alcohol.

²In writing my manuscript I made the slip of replacing the word Brill by that of Bree, the name of another medical friend. The mistake is evidently a contamination derived from the word-picture of "Brill on the *spree*," and is determined by the memory of tenuous jests relating to Berlin on the (river) Spree; both the vowel and the consonants of Brill are contained in the word Berlin. It is only right to add, however, that the thoughts of both Dr. Brill and Dr. Bree are intimately connected in my mind with Berlin in ways that discretion prevents me from describing.

German equivalent, *Freudenmädchen*—a cheap joke I had heard in Germany in this connection on Professor Freud's name;" as a matter of fact I had on the previous evening read a passage in his *Traumdeutung* where he refers to jokes on names. Turn which way I would I arrived at the same end-point, and I began to suspect that this was not chance. It might be said that for some reason or other, whether from the number coinciding with that in the Berggasse or what not, thoughts relating to Professor Freud were at the time occupying my mind to the exclusion of all else, in reply to which I have to say that I do not find this so in other analyses, and that in my experience, whenever free, unforced associations constantly lead in the same direction there is some good reason for it; in such cases there is invariably some essential, significant connection between the starting-point and the end reached. Further, the more far-fetched and strained the associations appear, as in this example, in other words the more superficial they are, the more important is the underlying essential connection found to be. This conclusion, clearly demonstrated in Jung's experimental work, was fully confirmed in the present instance. Although I could see no possible connection between my friend and Professor Freud, of whom he knew nothing, I was led to investigate the contents of the letter I had sent him. To my amazement I found that the main feature of it could be applied to Professor Freud in the same sense, and that I must unknowingly have harbored a wish to send it to him; in the slip in writing I had expressed my unconscious wish to send the letter to another man by addressing the envelope partly to him and partly to the one I consciously intended it to go to. There can be no question as to the intense personal significance of the complex covered by the superficial associations of the analysis, for wild horses would not tear from me the contents of that letter.

Mistakes in addressing envelopes, as in the example just mentioned, are generally manifestations of some disturbing thought that the writer does not mean to express. A young lady was secretly engaged to a medical man, whom we will call Arthur X. She addressed a letter one day not to Dr. Arthur X., but to Dear Arthur X., thus expressing her desire to let all the world know of their relationship.

Not long ago I was treating a case of exceptional interest in a patient who lived some sixty miles from Toronto. On account of the distance the patient, who could not leave his work, was able to visit me only twice a week. I found it impossible to treat him on these conditions, and wrote to tell him so. Instead of writing the name of his town on the

envelope, however, I wrote Toronto, displaying my wish that he were more conveniently situated.

V. MISPRINTS

Misprints may of course arise from errors made by the writer, the editor, the proof-reader, or the printer. From time to time the press records amusing instances of a disagreeable truth unintentionally leaking out in the form of a misprint; in Freud's book several examples of this are related.¹ Unlike the other kinds of failure under discussion one here is rarely in a position to obtain an objective verification of a given interpretation, but sometimes this in itself reaches a high grade of probability. At all events general principles indicate that the mistake made must be determined by personal constellations of whoever made it, and cannot be altogether accidental.

In a recent number of the *Zentralblatt für Psycho-analyse*² the title of a book of Gross' is wrongly given as "Das Freud'sche Ideogenitätsmonument" instead of *Ideogenitätsmoment*. As both the writer of the article, and the editorial staff (Drs. Adler and Stekel) regard the conception as a monumental one, it is possible that the overlooking of the mistake is to be correlated with this fact.

In a paper of my own on nightmare I wrote the sentence, "The association in general between the sex instinct and the emotions of fear and dread is a very intimate one." This was correctly rendered in the proof, but on the second occasion of reading it the proof-reader was shocked to think that I could make such an obviously outrageous mistake, and altered the word "intimate" to "distant," in which form it appeared in print.

In a brochure of mine that appeared as a German translation a mistake was made of a less unfortunate kind. One of my main theses was that the conception of Hamlet represented a projection of the most intimate part of Shakspere's personality, and so thoroughly did the translator absorb my view of the identity of the two that, when he came to a passage on the death of Shakspere's father, he substituted the name Hamlet for Shakspere and rendered the passage as referring to "the death of Hamlet's father in 1601." The substitution was overlooked in the proof by two other readers thoroughly familiar with the subject.

In the notorious Wicked Bible, issued in 1631, the word "not" was omitted from the Seventh Commandment, so

¹S. 66, etc.

²Jahrg. 5, Heft. 16, S. 197.

that this read, "Thou shalt commit adultery." The possibility is not to be excluded that the editor had a personal interest in the subject of the commandment. At all events he was heavily fined, it being empirically recognized that whether his purpose was conscious or unconscious he was equally responsible for it, and that he had no right, even "accidentally," to impute such commandments to Jahve.

Type-writing, being a form of writing, is subject to the same influence as this. Mistakes made may be due to either a "Verschreiben" or a "Verlesen," in any case being determined by the previous mental constellations of the typist. Thus my typist, having worked long in a lawyer's office, is fond of replacing "illogical" by "illegal," and, being of a very proper turn of mind, makes such mistakes as changing "a vulgar word" to "a regular word." I have found that distinctness of calligraphy is powerless to prevent such mistakes.

One practical aspect of this matter is generally recognized, namely, that accuracy in correcting proofs can be attained only by getting some one else to do it for one. A mistake once made in the manuscript, and then copied, is very apt to get overlooked by the person who made it. The affective blindness that enabled him to make the mistake, or, more strictly, that enabled an unconscious impulse to come to expression, will very likely continue its action by preventing him from recognizing it.

VI. FALSE VISUAL RECOGNITION

In visual perception the same mistakes of affective origin that were discussed in connection with memory are frequently to be observed, and here also they are of two kinds, a failure to see something that for various reasons we do not want to see, and a falsification of perception in the light of personal complexes. Examples of the former kind are very common in connection with reading the newspaper. Thus, just when a relative was crossing the Atlantic last year, I saw in the news-headings that a serious accident had happened to a liner, but I had the greatest difficulty in finding the account of it in the paper, overlooking it again and again.

False perceptions perhaps consist most often in catching sight of one's name where it really does n't occur. As a rule the word that has attracted one's attention is very similar to one's name, containing perhaps the same letters differently arranged. Professor Bleuler¹ relates an example where this was not so, and where, therefore, the essential cause of the mistake must have been of a greater affective intensity; the

¹Bleuler: *Affektivität, Suggestibilität, Paranoia*, 1906, S. 121.

word was really "Blutkörperchen," only the first two letters being common to the two words. He explained it thus: "In diesem Falle liess sich aber der Beziehungswahn und die Illusion sehr leicht begründen: Was ich gerade las, war das Ende einer Bemerkung über eine Art schlechten Stiles von wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten, von der ich mich nicht frei fühlte."

Freud¹ quotes an example from Lichtenberg: "He always mistook "angenommen" for "Agamemnon," so thoroughly had he read his Homer." In searching an American newspaper for English political news at the time of the Navy scare, my attention was caught by the heading "German danger;" on looking nearer I saw that it was "General danger."

Similar observations can be made in regard to the perception of other objects than written matter, and especially with the recognizing of other people. False recognition is quite commonly due to a pervading desire to meet the person in question; a lover who has a rendezvous with his mistress fancies he sees her coming many times over, when really the women he mistakes for her bear only the faintest resemblance to her.

The failure to greet a friend or acquaintance in the street is not always due to not seeing them, and one knows how gradual are the shades between a direct "cut," where one person consciously pretends he does not see the other, and a not seeing that is due to a not wanting to see.² Women intuitively feel that the difference between the two is unimportant, and are as much offended by the one as by the other; some one who thinks highly of them has no right not to see them when they pass.

A striking instance of this affective blindness occurred to me not long ago. It is part of my routine duty to check the invoices for laboratory apparatus as they come in, and hand them over to the assistant superintendent to see that they get paid. On one occasion I had neglected to do this until a small number collected. I then went through them, and took them with me into the assistant superintendent's office. I was very pressed for time, and hoped he would n't be there so that I could simply deposit them on his desk; especially so, as there was a small error in one of them that I had to point out to him, and I realized that his over-conscientiousness would mean a tedious investigation of the error. I felt, however, that I ought to try to find him, and explain

¹Freud: *Op. cit.* S. 64.

²One might invert the familiar proverb and say: "What the heart doesn't grieve over, the eye doesn't see."

the point to him. On going into his office I saw several men there, went up to one of them who had his back to me, and said, "Do you know where Dr. X. is?" To my astonishment he replied, "Why, I am Dr. X." My not recognizing him was facilitated by the fact of his having an unfamiliar hat on, but the actual cause of it I knew well enough.

The phenomenon of "fausse reconnaissance," or "*déjà vu*," which has perplexed so many psychologists, is closely allied to the same category. Freud has finally solved this riddle,¹ but as the explanation of it is of a more complex order than with the other occurrences under consideration, I shall not go into it here.

VII. MISLAYING OF OBJECTS

It is probable that objects are never accidentally mislaid. The underlying motive manifests itself in two ways, in the act of mislaying the object, and in the subsequent amnesia; in other words a "*Verlegen*" is a composite of a "*Vergreifen*" and a "*Vergessen*," the latter being the main feature. As before, the motive may be a counter-impulse directed against the use of the object, or against an idea associated with the use of it. Instances of both will be given, first of the former.

We are all more apt to mislay bills rather than cheques, and in general objects that we don't want to see rather than those we do. Apparent exceptions to this rule, such as the mislaying of valuable objects, come under the second category, where our objection is not to the thing itself, but to what it can remind us of.

A common experience, which has often occurred to me personally, is the following: Whenever I suffer from the effects of over-smoking, I notice that it is much harder to find my pipe; it has got put behind ornaments or books, and in all sorts of unusual places that it normally does not occupy.

A patient of mine was recently very put out at having lost an important bunch of keys. He told me that he urgently wanted them that afternoon to open the lock of a minute book at a meeting with his auditor and solicitor. I enquired as to the purpose of the meeting. It appeared that an important resolution had been passed at an annual directors' meeting, and that he had omitted to enter it in the minute book. He was the managing director, and it became a question legally whether a certain action could be taken without the formal consent of the other directors, or whether possibly the minute could be subsequently added by private arrangement with them. At all events it was an annoying situation,

¹Freud: *Op. cit.* S. 139.

and I felt sure that his dislike of having to face it was connected with the loss of the key. Further enquiry showed that he had used the keys only once that morning, to open his office desk; after doing this it was his custom immediately to replace them in his pocket, the desk being provided with an automatic closing lock. He had missed the keys as soon as he got into the street car to come to see me, and had telephoned a message for a clerk to search the short distance between his private office and the car line. The surmise was near that he must have flung the bunch into his desk behind some papers, later closing it in the usual way; on telephoning to have the desk forcibly opened, this was found to be correct.

The following example is a little more complicated. A lady had lost the key of a box containing phonograph records, and had thoroughly ransacked her rooms for it many times during six weeks, but all in vain. The records belonged to a correspondence college, and were a means of learning French pronunciation. They had been put away early in the summer, and now, in the autumn, she wanted them for the purpose of renewing her French studies. Her whole heart was not in these, however, for it happened that she was fond of singing and hoped to get accepted in an orchestral choir, the rehearsals of which would leave her no time for other studies. As time went on she despaired more and more of being accepted, and fell back on the French as the next best way of occupying her winter evenings. Soon after her definite rejection by the choir she discovered the lost key, which had been carefully stowed away in the corner of an attic. She recollects locking the box in the early summer, and thinking that she would not need it again for a long time, but had no memory of putting the key away. She was extremely proud of her voice, and had built on her application being successful. Taking up the French studies connoted failure of her hopes. Her inability to find the key thus symbolized her lothness to believe that her vocal reputation would be slighted.

To lose or misplace a present, especially if it happens more than once, is not generally considered a compliment to the giver, and with right, for it often is an unconscious expression of disdain, disregard, or indifference. When a wife repeatedly loses her wedding ring during the honeymoon, it does not augur well for the future happiness of the marriage. Freud relates an example of misplacing where the motive was of this kind, and which, like the last mentioned example, is interesting in regard to the circumstances under which the object was again found. It concerned a married couple who lived rather aloof lives from each other, any marks of tenderness being of a distinctly lukewarm nature; the fault, according to the

husband, lay in the emotional apathy of his wife. One day she made him a present of a book that would interest him. He thanked her for the attention, promised to read it, put it aside, and could n't find it again. In the next six months he made several vain attempts to find it. At the end of this time his mother, to whom he was devoted, got seriously ill, and was very tenderly nursed by his wife. His affection for his wife rapidly increased, and one evening, coming home from the sick bed with his heart filled with gratitude towards her, he went to his desk and, without any conscious purpose, unhesitatingly opened a drawer and took out the lost book.

Leaving things behind one is a common type of mislaying. To do so in the street or in a public conveyance has a very different significance from doing so in the house of a friend. In the latter case it often expresses the person's attachment, and the difficulty he has in tearing himself away. One can almost measure the success with which a physician is practising psychotherapy, for instance, by the size of the collection of umbrellas, handkerchiefs, purses, and so on, that he could make in a month.

VIII. ERRONEOUSLY CARRIED OUT ACTIONS

A secondary suppressed tendency may manifest itself in the disturbance not only of writing, but also of any other conscious motor act, an occurrence Freud terms a "Vergreifen." The intended action is not carried out, or only incorrectly, being entirely or partly replaced by an action corresponding with the suppressed impulse that breaks through. As in the former cases this secondary tendency is associated, either directly or indirectly, with the conscious intention, and the faulty action is customarily explained as being due to "chance," "accident," or "carelessness."

A trite example will perhaps best illustrate the type of occurrence. On starting to open a fresh tin of tobacco I economically reflected that I should first finish the rather dry remains of the previous one. A few minutes later, however, while engrossed in reading, I wanted to refill my pipe, and to my surprise detected myself in the act of opening the new tin, although I had pushed it farther away from me than the other. My checked wish to enjoy the fresh tobacco had taken advantage of my distraction, and so interfered with my conscious intention of filling the pipe from the old tin.

An equally simple example is the following. It is my custom to put scientific journals, as they arrive, on a stool in the corner of my study. On reading them I write on the back the page number of any articles I wish to enter in my refer-

ence books; the journals not so marked are put on top of the files, to be bound at the end of the year, while the others are placed on a pile at one side of my desk. Once a week or so I go through this pile and enter the references, but, whenever I have neglected this for so long that the pile begins to assume formidable dimensions, I find I have a pronounced tendency to put no more there, and to put on the files any fresh journal I read, whether it has articles that should be entered or not. The motive is obvious, to save myself the trouble of having to enter more than I already have to.

A lady went to post some letters which had come for her brother, and which had to be re-addressed and forwarded on account of his absence. When she got home she found the letters still in her hand-bag, but realized that she had posted two letters addressed to herself, which she had opened that morning; they duly arrived on the next day. At the time another younger brother was at home seriously ill with typhoid fever, and she had just written to the elder brother begging him to come home as soon as possible. She knew, however, that on account of urgent business he would not be able to leave immediately, but her posting letters addressed to the home under the impression that she was sending them to her brother, indicated her keen anxiety that he was already there.

A patient came up from the country to get advice about various obsessing ideas that greatly distressed him. He had been recommended to consult two physicians, another one and myself. The other physician told him "not to think about the ideas," and advised him to take a course of physical exercise at a special gymnasium that he kept for the purpose. I of course advised psycho-analytic treatment, which has since cured him. He promised us both that he would think the matter over, and let us know what he decided. That night, on getting home, he wrote to each of us, to the other physician that he could n't yet make up his mind, and to me that he would like to make an appointment to begin the treatment as soon as possible. He put the letters into the wrong envelopes. During the subsequent psycho-analysis it became evident that this "accidental" mistake was unconsciously determined by the spiteful desire to let both the other physician and myself know what his opinion was of the former's advice.

The use of keys is a fertile source of occurrences of this kind, of which two examples may be given. If I am disturbed in the midst of some engrossing work at home by having to go to the hospital to carry out some routine work, I am very apt to find myself trying to open the door of my laboratory there with

the key of my desk at home, although the two keys are quite unlike each other. The mistake unconsciously demonstrates where I would rather be at the moment.

Some years ago I was acting in a subordinate position at a certain institution, the front door of which was kept locked, so that it was necessary to ring for admission. On several occasions I found myself making serious attempts to open the door with my house key. Each one of the permanent visiting staff, of which I aspired to be a member, was provided with a key, to avoid the trouble of having to wait at the door. My mistakes thus expressed my desire to be on a similar footing, and to be quite "at home" there.

Two other everyday sets of occurrences may briefly be mentioned where unconscious disturbances of otherwise intended actions are very frequent. The one is the matter of paying out money, and particularly of giving change. It would be an interesting experiment to establish statistically the percentage of such mistakes that are in favor of the person making them, in comparison with that of the opposite sort.

The second is the sphere of domestic breakages. It can be observed that after a servant has been reprimanded, especially when the reprimand is more than usually unjust in her eyes, is a favorite time for crockery to "come to pieces in her hand." Careless breakage of valuable china, an event that often perplexes the owner as much as it incenses her, may be the product of a number of factors in the mind of the transgressor, class envy of valuable property, ignorant lack of appreciation for objects of art, resentment at having to devote so much labor to the care of what appear to be senseless objects of enthusiasm, personal hostility towards the owner, and so on.

IX. SYMPTOMATIC ACTS

Under the name of "Symptomhandlungen" Freud discusses a series of unconsciously performed actions that differ from the last-mentioned ones in being independent activities, and not grafted on to another conscious one. They are done "without thinking" or "by chance," and no significance is seen in them. Analysis of them, however, shows that they are the symbolic expression of some suppressed tendency, usually a wish. In many instances the action is a complicated one, and performed on only one occasion; in others it is a constant habit that often is characteristic of the person. The mannerisms of dress, of fingering the moustache or clothes-buttons, the playing with coins in the pocket, and so

on, are examples of this kind; they all have their logical meaning, though this needs to be read before becoming evident.

Different ways of occupying the hands often betray thoughts that the person does not wish to express or even does not know of. It is related of Eleonora Duse that in a divorce play, while in a soliloquy following a wrangle with the husband, she kept playing with her wedding-ring, taking it off, replacing it, and finally taking it off again; she is now ready for the seducer. The action illustrates the profundity of the great actress' character studies.

Maeder¹ tells the following story of a Zurich colleague who had a free day and was hesitating between making an agreeable holiday of it and paying a distasteful duty call on some people in Lucerne. He ultimately decided on the latter, and dolefully set out. Half way to Lucerne he had to change trains; he did this mechanically, and settled down in the other train to continue his reading of the morning papers. When the ticket collector came round he discovered that he had taken a train back to Zurich. His wish to spend the day there and not in Lucerne had proved too strong for his good intentions.

In most of the examples previously mentioned in this paper, and of those encountered in real life, it is possible to discover a motive for the given occurrence that logically accounts for this, but which does not lie particularly deep in the person's mind. In other words, it is, in Freud's language, fore-conscious,² and the subject has no particular difficulty in recognizing it as an integral part of his personality. The problem, however, is far from exhausted at this point. It is next necessary to discover the origin of the motive or tendency in question, or to explain why it needs to be expressed at all. In this investigation one reaches the realm of the unconscious proper, and here it often turns out that the error which is being analyzed has a deeper meaning, that it symbolizes more than the fore-conscious motive, and expresses tendencies of much greater personal significance; this may be the case, however trivial the error in itself. In some of the preceding examples the fore-conscious motive disclosed appears trite, and it seems unlikely that such a trifling matter should need a complicated psychological mechanism to manifest itself. In the cases of this kind that I have had the opportunity of submitting to a detailed psycho-analysis, I have found that the unconscious associations often shed an unexpectedly

¹Maeder: *Nouvelles contributions à la psychopathologie de la vie quotidienne*. Arch. de Psychol., 1908. VII, p. 296.

²For the explanation of this and allied terms see Psychol. Bull., April, 1910. p. III.

instructive light on the full meaning of the occurrence. Unfortunately, however, the motives thus reached are usually of so intimate a nature that discretion forbids the publishing of them.

In still other cases no fore-conscious motive can be discerned, and the error appears to be quite meaningless until the truly unconscious sources are reached. In the following example¹ the fore-conscious motive was not discovered until the resistance to the unconscious sources of it were broken down. It is further peculiarly instructive in illustrating what important and fundamental traits of character may be revealed by the analysis of an absolutely trivial occurrence.

A doctor on re-arranging his furniture in a new house came across an old-fashioned, straight, wooden stethoscope, and after pausing to decide where he should put it, was impelled to place it on the side of his writing-desk in such a position that it stood exactly between his chair and the one reserved for his patients. The act in itself was certainly odd, for in the first place the straight stethoscope served no purpose, as he invariably used a binaural one; and in the second place all his medical apparatus and instruments were kept put away in drawers, with the sole exception of this one. However, he gave no thought at all to the matter until one day it was brought to his notice by a patient, who had never seen a wooden stethoscope, asking him what it was. On being told, she asked why he kept it just there; he answered in an off-hand way that that place was as good as any other. This started him thinking, however, and he wondered whether there had been any unconscious motive in his action. Being interested in the psycho-analytic method he asked me to investigate the matter.

The first memory that occurred to him was the fact that when a medical student he had been struck by the habit his hospital interne had of always carrying in his hand a wooden stethoscope on his ward visits, although he never used it. He greatly admired this interne, and was much attached to him. Later on, when he himself became an interne, he contracted the same habit, and would feel very uncomfortable if by mistake he left his room without having the instrument to swing in his hand. The aimlessness of the habit was shown not only by the fact that the only stethoscope he ever used was a binaural one, which he carried in his pocket, but also in that it was continued when he was a surgical interne and never needed any stethoscope at all.

¹In the Zentralb. f. Psychoanalyse, Jahrg. 1, S. 96, I have published a fuller account of this example.

From this it was evident that the idea of the instrument in question had in some way or other become invested with a greater psychical significance than normally belongs to it, in other words, that to the subject it stood for more than it does with other people. The idea must have got unconsciously associated with some other one, which it symbolized, and from which it derived its additional fulness of meaning. I will forestall the rest of the analysis by saying what this secondary idea was, namely a phallic one; the way in which this curious association had been formed will presently be related. The discomfort he experienced in hospital on missing the instrument, and the relief and reassurance the presence of it gave him, was related to what is known as a "castration-complex," namely, a childhood fear, often continued in a disguised form into adult life, lest a private part of his body should be taken away from him, just as playthings so often were; the fear was due to paternal threats that it would be cut off if he were not a good boy, particularly in a certain direction. This is a very common complex, and accounts for a great deal of general nervousness, and lack of confidence, in later years.

Then came a number of childhood memories relating to his family doctor. He had been strongly attached to this doctor as a child, and during the analysis long buried memories were recovered of a double phantasy¹ he had in his fourth year concerning the birth of a younger sister, namely that she was the child (1) of himself and his mother, the father being relegated to the background, and (2) of the doctor and himself; in this he thus played both a masculine and feminine part. At the time, when his curiosity was being aroused by the event, he could not help noticing the prominent share taken by the doctor in the proceedings, and the subordinate position occupied by the father; the significance of this for later life will presently be pointed out.

The stethoscope association was formed through many connections. In the first place, the physical appearance of the instrument, a straight, rigid, hollow tube, having a small bulbous summit at one extremity, and a broad base at the other, and the fact of its being the essential part of the medical paraphernalia, the instrument with which the doctor performed his magical and interesting feats, were matters that attracted his boyish attention. He had had his chest repeatedly examined by the doctor at the age of six, and distinctly recollects the voluptuous sensation of feeling the latter's head near him pressing the wooden stethoscope into his chest, and of the

¹Psycho-analytic research, with the penetration of infantile amnesia, has shown that this apparent precocity is a less abnormal occurrence than was previously supposed.

rhythmic to-and-fro respiratory movement. He had been struck by the doctor's habit of carrying his stethoscope inside his hat; he found it interesting that the doctor should carry his chief instrument concealed about his person, always handy when he went to see patients, and that he only had to take off his hat (*i. e.* a part of his clothing) and "pull it out." At the age of eight he was impressed by being told by an older boy that it was the doctor's custom to get into bed with his women patients. It is certain that the doctor, who was young and handsome, was extremely popular among the women of the neighborhood, including the subject's own mother. The doctor and his "instrument" were therefore the objects of great interest throughout his boyhood.

It is probable that, as in many other cases, unconscious identification with the family doctor had been a main motive in determining the subject's choice of profession. It was here doubly conditioned, (1) by the superiority of the doctor on certain interesting occasions to the father, of whom the subject was very jealous, and (2) by the doctor's knowledge of forbidden topics¹ and his opportunities for illicit indulgence. The subject admitted that he had on several occasions experienced erotic temptations in regard to his women patients; he had twice fallen in love with one, and finally had married one.

The next memory was of a dream, which I have published elsewhere,² plainly of a homosexual-masochistic nature; in it a man, who proved to be a replacement-figure of the family doctor, attacked the subject with a "sword." The idea of a sword, as is so frequently the case in dreams, represented the same idea that was mentioned above to be associated with that of a wooden stethoscope. The thought of a sword reminded the subject of the passage in the Nibelung Saga where Sigurd sleeps with his naked sword (Gram) between him and Brunhilda, an incident that had always greatly struck his imagination.

The meaning of the symptomatic act now at last became clear. The subject had placed his wooden stethoscope between him and his patients, just as Sigurd had placed his sword (an equivalent symbol) between him and the maiden he was not to touch. The act was a compromise-formation; it served both to gratify in his imagination the repressed wish to enter into nearer relations with an attractive patient (interposition of phallus), and at the same time to remind him that this wish was not to become a reality (interposition of sword). It was, so to speak, a charm against yielding to temptation. .

¹The term "medical questions" is a common periphrasis for "sexual questions."

²*Amer. Journal of Psychol.*, April, 1910, p. 301.

X. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

(1) *Warrant for Interpretations*

The first criticism of the theses here maintained that naturally presents itself is the question as to the reliability of the individual interpretations. It is not likely that any one will reject them all as improbable, but, particularly with the more complex analyses, doubt must arise concerning the trustworthiness of the results. This is especially so in regard to the personal, subjective factor in the interpretations, although as a matter of fact the very constancy of the way in which similar conclusions are reached by different observers indicates that this factor is less potent than might be imagined. Experience shows that, when attention is carefully directed to the objective aspects of the analysis, the importance of the personal factor, which from the unavoidable nature of the circumstances can never be entirely eliminated, can be reduced to a degree where it is practically negligible. In most scientific work the personal factor has to be reckoned with, but appreciation of the way in which it acts, especially when this is based on psychological knowledge, as a rule enables it to be excluded to such an extent as not to interfere with conclusions being formulated that are valid enough to stand the objective test of verifiability. It is contended that this statement applies unrestrictedly to psycho-analytic interpretations. It is, of course, to be conceded that the probable accuracy of these interpretations varies considerably in different instances, as conclusions do elsewhere in science. Thus, in a chemical analysis, the conclusion as to whether a given substance is present or not varies in probability according to the quality and amount of evidence obtainable; in some cases the confirmatory tests are so unequivocal that the final decision is a practically certain one, in others it is very probable, in still others it is only a plausible possibility, and so on.

The view that the psycho-analytic interpretations of the class of occurrences under discussion are reliable is based on, among others, the following considerations:

(a) The psychological correctness of the principles of the free association method. This is too complex a matter to be gone into here, and I will only refer the reader to Jung's well-known works¹ on the subject.

(b) The constancy of the findings by different observers, and the harmony of the conclusions with those reached in the study of other fields, e. g., dreams, psycho-neuroses, mythology, etc. It is extremely unlikely that this is due to coincidence,

¹Jung: Diagnostische Assoziationsstudien. Bd. I, 1906, Bd. II, 1910.

and still more so that it is due to identical prejudices on the part of the different workers, for in the first place this would be postulating a very remarkable uniformity in their individual mental constellations, and in the second place psycho-analytic research brings with it an eradication of personal prejudice, and an appreciation of personal complexes, that is rarely attained elsewhere in the same degree.

(c) The increased intelligibility of the processes in question. An occurrence that previously was obscure and meaningless now becomes throughout comprehensible, and an integral part of the rest of the person's mental operations. It is seen to be merely an irregular manifestation of a logical tendency that is an essential constituent of the personality, the unusual features having certain definite reasons for their occurrence. Moreover, the discovery of the underlying motive, and its connection with the manifestation being analyzed, is a matter that commonly lends itself to external verification. When, in an analysis, one traces a given error in mental functioning, such as a *lapsus linguae*, to a thought that the person was desirous of keeping back, it is usually easy to confirm the truth of the conclusion. Very significant in this connection is the unmistakable evidence of the resulting affect in the person, which accurately corresponds with that characteristic of the revealed mental process. Often this is so pronounced that it is quite impossible to doubt the truth of the interpretation made; this especially is a matter where personal experience is more convincing than any possible amount of discussion.

(d) The fact that in many fields the principles in question are generally recognized to be valid. Freud's study is only a detailed working-out of laws that were already known to hold true over a limited area. When a man is hurt at finding his name unfortunately forgotten, or at unexpectedly being passed by unrecognized in the street; when a lady is offended by some one who professes regard for her forgetting to carry out her behests or to keep a rendezvous, they are displaying an affect that accords perfectly with the inferences of the psycho-analyst, and with no others. In this correct intuition of mankind lies already the essential nucleus of the conclusions maintained by Freud.

Indeed it is quite impossible to go through life without constantly making interpretations of just this kind, though usually they are simpler and more evident than those needing a special psycho-analysis. Observation of a very few jokes is sufficient to illustrate this, and we "read between the lines" of the people we have to do with, doubting the scientific justification of our right to do so as little as we do in the interpreta-

tions of jokes.¹ This holds in the most manifold fields of mental activity. Three examples may be quoted, of a kind that could be multiplied indefinitely. With Mr. E. R. Bennett's play "The Servant in the House," no one can witness it intelligently and doubt that the Hindoo servant, who is the principal character, is a presentation of Jesus Christ, or that his name "Manson" is a disguised form of the title "Son of Man." Yet we should find it difficult to "prove" this to a carping critic who is bent on avoiding the obvious inference, and still more to "prove" our assumption that the disguise was the product of definite motives in the author's mind. In Mr. Bernard Shaw's play "Press Cuttings" one of the characters, the Prime Minister of England, is called "Balsquith." When one infers that he compounded the word from the names of two Prime Ministers, Balfour and Asquith, the critic may accuse us of reading into Mr. Shaw's mind views of our own that never existed there.² In Shelley's "Œdipus Tyrannus" what right have we to assume that in his ridicule of the Ionian Minotaur³ the author was satirizing the Englishman of his time? Our answer in all these cases is the same, namely, that we feel justified in making the inferences in question because they make something intelligible that otherwise would have no meaning. This answer is perfectly correct, for in the last analysis the justification of every scientific generalization is that it enables us to comprehend something that is otherwise obscure, namely, the relations between apparently dissimilar phenomena.

To this it may be said that in such cases as those just mentioned a logical meaning is given to something that from previous experience we have every reason to expect has one, but that the point in dispute about the "psychopathological" occurrences of everyday life is whether they have such a meaning or not. Here *a priori* argument can take us no farther, and the question can only be referred for solution to actual investigation, a matter usually considered unnecessary, on the pure assumption that the occurrences have no logical meaning. Freud's scepticism made him challenge the necessity of this assumption, and prefer to leave the question open

¹In "Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten" Freud has made a detailed study of this subject. As with the occurrences studied in the present paper, he has shown that the insight consciously obtained is often only a partial one, and that the true significance is often related to unconscious sources.

²The royal censor refused to let the play be acted until the name was replaced by one less open to this personal interpretation, namely, Johnson; the name of the commander in chief, Mitchener (from Milner and Kitchener), had to be altered to Bones.

³=John Bull.

until it was investigated. On doing so he found as a matter of experience two things, namely, that the realm of psychical determinism is more extensive than is generally supposed, and that awareness of a motive at a given moment is not a necessary accompaniment of the external manifestation of this.

Freud further came to the conclusion that there was a definite cause for the popular belief that so many blunders in our mental functioning are meaningless. He holds that this belief is due to the same cause as the blunders themselves, namely, to repression. Various repressed thoughts are in every one of us constantly coming to expression in the shape of "meaningless" blunders, the significance of which necessarily escapes us. Being thus accustomed to the occurrence of such matters in ourselves we naturally attach no significance to them in others; we "explain" these as we do our own, or accept the "explanations" proffered just as we expect others to accept the "explanations" of our own blunders.

As to these explanations little more need be added. Where the factors they have recourse to are operative at all, they act only as predisposing conditions, not as the true cause. Freud¹ gives the following apposite illustration of the actual state of affairs. "Suppose I have been so incautious as to go for a stroll in a lonely part of the town, where I am attacked and robbed of my watch and money. At the next police station I give information with the words: I have been in this and that street, where *loneliness* and *darkness* stole my watch and money. Although in these words I should have said nothing that was not correct, still from the wording of my information I run the danger of being thought not quite right in the head. The state of affairs can correctly be described only thus, that *favored* by the *loneliness* of the spot, and *unrecognizable* through the *protection* of the darkness, a thief has robbed me of my valuables. Now, the state of affairs in the forgetting of a name need not be otherwise; favored by fatigue, circulatory disturbances and poisoning, some unknown psychical agent robs me of the proper names that belong to my memory, the same agent that on other occasions can bring about the same failure of memory, during perfect health and capacity." Similarly such a mistake as a slip of the tongue is often attributed by psychologists (*e. g.* Wundt) to a momentary inattentiveness. It is certainly a question of conscious attention, but Freud² has pointed out that the defect is more accurately described as a disturbance of attention than as a diminution, the true cause being the disturbing influence of a

¹Freud: *Zur Psychopathologie*. S. 22.

²Freud: *Op. cit.* S. 68.

second train of thought. The same remarks apply to all the other explanations urged. Several examples were given above in which names and other words differing by only one letter were confounded or interchanged, and evidence was brought forward to show that this external association was merely a predisposing circumstance, and not the actual cause of the mistake. Many such circumstances favor the occurrence of a blunder, that is, they permit a repressed thought to slip partly through. Alcoholic intoxication is notoriously one. Emotional excitement is another. Many blunders, forgettings, and other oversights, are attributed to the confusion of hurry. Thus, for instance, I have noticed that the using of the wrong key, in the examples quoted above, most often occurred when I was in a great hurry (the same was true of the not recognizing the assistant superintendent in his office), but if haste were the true cause it would be curious that it should bring about a blunder of a kind that defeats its own object; strictly speaking it is the emotional confusion or excitement engendered by hurry that permits a second repressed impulse to manifest itself in what externally appears as a blunder.

As has been remarked above, there are certain occasions in everyday life when the normal person divines the motivation of unintentional errors, though these are rare in comparison with the occasions on which it escapes him. Freud¹ has pointed out that there are two other groups of processes in which an *unconscious*, and therefore distorted, knowledge of this motivation is manifested, namely in paranoia and in superstitions. In both these the subject reads a meaning into external happenings that have no such psychical meaning, and, in a very interesting discussion of the subject, Freud produces reasons to believe that this erroneous functioning is due to a projection to the outside of motives that exist in the subject's mind and are full of meaning there, but which he does not directly perceive.

A little may be said on a feature of some of the analyses quoted that may strike the reader as odd, namely, the remarkable play on words that is so often found. Whoever is surprised at this needs to be reminded of the almost boundless extent to which the same feature occurs in other fields of mental activity, in wit, dreams, insanity, and so on. Even in the serious affairs of everyday life it is far from unusual. Thus, to cite a few business announcements, we see the National Drug Company using as its trade motto "Nadru," the National Liquorice Company (N. L. Co.) that of "Enelco," we find the Levy Jewellery Company reversing its first name into the

¹Freud: *Op. cit.* S. 131 *et seq.*

more pretentious one of Yvel, and advertisements of "Uneeda" biscuits and "Phiteezi" boots are familiar to every one. This tendency to play on words, and to produce a more useful or pleasing result (mirror-writing, ciphers, and rhyming slang¹ also belong here), is evidently dictated by the same *Unlust* motives—to avoid banal or otherwise unattractive words—that so much stress has been laid on above. It is one that has far-reaching roots in early childhood life. In fore-conscious and unconscious mental activities this play on words—clang associations—is much more extensive than in consciousness, and serves for the transference of a given affect from one mode of expression to a more suitable and convenient one.

(2) *Bearing on psycho-analytic method of treatment*

Three brief remarks may be made on this matter. In the first place, investigation of the errors and slips of everyday life is perhaps the best mode of approach to the study of psycho-analysis, and affords a convenient preliminary to the more difficult, and more important, subject of dreams. The greatest value is to be attached to self-analysis, a fact to which attention cannot too often be called. In the second place, analysis of the occurrences in question is of great service in the treatment of neurotic patients. Their behavior in this respect needs to be closely observed, and frequently a quite trivial occurrence will, when investigated, provide clues to the elucidation of the main problems. Thirdly, consideration of the mechanism of these erroneous functionings makes it easy to understand the way in which psycho-analysis brings about its therapeutic effects. Both the errors and neurotic symptoms are the manifestations of dissociated conative trends which are weaker than the rest of the personality opposed to them, are consequently repressed, and can come to expression only in indirect ways and only under certain circumstances. An essential condition for this is non-awareness of the process. Psycho-analysis by directing the dissociated trend into consciousness abolishes this condition, and therefore brings the trend under the control of the conscious inhibiting forces. Conscious control is substituted for automatic expression, the significance of which was not realized. These considerations may be illustrated by the tritest of the examples given above, namely, my opening of a fresh

¹The following are instances from the Cockney type of this. "Aristotle" =bottle. "Cain and Abel" =table. "Harry Nichols" =pickles. Mediate forms are: "Christmas" (card)=guard: "Bull" (and cow)=row: "Malcolm" (Scott)=hot; "Stockton" (on-Tees)=cheese: "Rosie" (Loader)=soda, and so on.

tobacco tin although I wished first to finish the old one. Here it is quite obvious that the rule just stated holds, that an essential condition of the erroneous functioning is non-awareness of the significance of the process; I knew that I was reaching for tobacco, but did n't notice which tin it was. The moment I realized the situation I of course checked the error, and controlled the wish that was taking advantage of my absent-mindedness to come to expression. On a larger scale the same is true of neurotic symptoms; realization of their significance checks the morbid expression of the underlying impulse. *The cardinal proposition is that consciousness of an aberrant impulse means increased control of it.*

(3) *Relation to health and disease*

This matter should be fairly evident from the preceding considerations, so that the two corollaries that follow in this respect need only to be stated. The first is that from a psychological point of view perfect mental normality does not exist. In other words, every one shows numerous defects in mental functioning that are manifestations of dissociated, repressed, psychical material, and which are brought about by the same psychological mechanisms as those operative in the case of the psycho-neuroses. A further matter not brought out in the preceding study is that this material is ultimately of the same nature as that from which neuroses are produced. The second corollary is that the border-line between mental health and disease is much less sharp even than is generally supposed. The distinction between the two is really a social one, rather than a psychopathological one, just as the distinction between sanity and insanity is primarily a legal one. When the erroneous mental functioning happens to carry with it a social incapacity or disability the condition is called a neurosis, and when it does not it is called absent-mindedness, eccentricity, personal mannerism, and so on. Further reflections on the significance of these conclusions will here be omitted, as they are not relevant to the main purpose of the paper.

(4) *Determinism and Free Will*¹

One of the psychological arguments against the belief in a complete mental determinism is the intense feeling of conviction that we have a perfectly free choice in the performance of many acts. This feeling of conviction must be justified by something, but at the same time it is entirely compatible with a complete determinism. It is curious that it is not

¹This section is largely paraphrased from Freud, *Op. cit.* S. 130.

often prominent with important and weighty decisions; on these occasions one has much more the feeling of being irresistibly impelled in a given direction (compare Luther's "Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders"). On the contrary it is with trivial and indifferent resolutions that one is sure that one could just as well have acted otherwise, that one has acted from non-motived free will. From the psycho-analytic point of view the right of this feeling of conviction is not contested. It only means that the person is not aware of any conscious motive. When, however, conscious motivation is distinguished from unconscious motivation, this feeling of conviction teaches us that the former does not extend over all our motor resolutions. What is left free from the one side receives its motive from the other, from the unconscious, and so the psychical determinism is flawlessly carried through. A knowledge of unconscious motivation is indispensable even for philosophical discussion of determinism.

(5) *Social Significance*

It would be interesting to speculate as to the result of a general knowledge of the unconscious motives that underlie the failures of mental functioning in everyday life, but it is perhaps more profitable to review some of the present results of ignorance of them.

One of these is that both intellectual and moral dishonesty is facilitated to an extraordinary extent. There is no doubt that dishonesty of which the subject is not conscious is much commoner than deliberate dishonesty, a fact of considerable importance in, for instance, juristic matters. The hysterical who cannot move her leg because unconsciously she wishes it to be paralyzed, the tourist who oversees a prohibiting notice because he finds such things annoying, and the impecunious man who forgets to pay a bill because he does n't want to, are all instances of this. At the same time the line between these two types of dishonesty is nowhere a sharp one, and in many cases one can only conclude that the subject could with a very little effort recognize the suppressed motive, which is more than half conscious. In psycho-analytic treatment this is constantly to be observed; the following slight example of it may be quoted. A young woman told me of a certain experience she had had in her childhood in company with a boy. I had every reason to believe that this was far from being an isolated one, and asked her whether it had occurred with any one else. She said, "Not that I can remember." Noticing the wording of her answer and a certain expression in her face, I asked, "What about the times that you can't remember?"

She exclaimed "Oh, shucks," and in such a disconcerted tone that I was sure my surmise had been well-founded. She then made the remark, "Well, I really had forgotten the other times till this minute," the truth of which was probably only partial. The incident made me think of Nietzsche's epigram: "One may indeed lie with the mouth, but with the accompanying grimace one nevertheless tells the truth." Half-amnesias of this kind are extremely common in daily life.

In spite of the constant endeavor to keep back disagreeable or unacceptable thoughts, these very thoughts betray themselves in blunders of the type under discussion. By the world this self-betrayal is passed by unnoticed, but it does not escape any one who has made a study of unconscious functioning. Freud¹ in no way exaggerates when he says: "He who has eyes to see, and ears to hear, becomes convinced that mortals can hide no secret. Whoever is silent with the lips, tattles with the finger-tips; betrayal oozes out of every pore." Moreover, even with a direct lie, careful observation of the undue emphasis here and the distortion there will usually disclose what the person is trying to conceal, for the lie is a creation of the same mind that at the moment is cognizant of the truth. It is very rare, especially on emotional occasions, for self-control to be so complete as to inhibit all unconscious manifestations, which to an attentive observer will indicate the truth. Strictly speaking, one cannot lie to another, only to oneself, and skilled introspection makes even this increasingly difficult.

An important consequence of this is that every one is apt to know more about the inner motives of those near to him than they themselves know, inasmuch as every one is continually performing at all events some simple kind of psychical analysis on those around him. This is a fertile source of misunderstandings and friction,² especially in family and married life where contact is much nearer. One person intuitively recognizes an intention or tendency in the other that the latter refuses to admit even to himself. When the unavoidable inferences are presented to him, he is indignant, rebuts them as being groundless, and complains that he is misunderstood. Strictly speaking, such misunderstanding is really a too fine understanding. The more nervous two people are, the more often do they give rise to schisms, the reasons for which are as categorically denied by the one as they are obvious to the other. This is the punishment for the inner improbity, that, under the pretext of forgetting, absent-mindedness, and so on,

¹Freud: *Sammlung kleiner Schriften*. Zweite Folge. S. 69.

²Freud. *Zur Psychopathologie*, S. 114.

people allow tendencies to come to expression which they would do better to admit to themselves and others, unless they can control them.

Most important, however, is the extension of these principles to the sphere of human judgment, for it is probable that repressed complexes play as prominent a part in distortion here as they do in the minor errors of memory mentioned above. On a large scale this is shown in two ways, in the minimum of evidence often necessary to secure the acceptance of an idea that is in harmony with existing mental constellations, or to reject one that is incompatible with these. In both cases it is often affective influences rather than intellectual operations that decide the question. The same evidence is construed quite differently when viewed in the light of one affective constellation from the way it is when viewed in the light of another. Further, when the general attitude towards a question changes in the course of time, this is often due at least as much to modification of the prevailing affective influences as to the accumulation of external evidence; for instance, the average man of to-day does not hesitate to reject the same evidence of witchcraft that was so convincing to the man of three centuries ago, though he usually knows no more about the true explanation of it than the latter did.

Ignorance of the importance of affective factors in this respect, combined with the ineradicable popular belief in the rationality of the individual mind, has the interesting result that strong differences of opinion are attributed by each side to a defect in reasoning capacity on the part of the other. In an exposition of this matter Trotter¹ writes: "The religious man accuses the atheist of being shallow and irrational, and is met with a similar reply; to the Conservative, the amazing thing about the Liberal is his incapacity to see reason and accept the only possible solution of public problems. Examination reveals the fact that the differences are not due to the commission of the mere mechanical fallacies of logic, since these are easily avoided, even by the politician, and since there is no reason to suppose that one party in such controversies is less logical than the other. The difference is due rather to the fundamental assumptions of the antagonists being hostile, and these assumptions are derived from herd suggestion."

There is a certain amount of truth in this imputation of stupidity to the person on the opposite side, for in his blind refusal to appreciate or even to perceive the evidence adduced by his opponent he may give an unavoidable appearance of

¹Wilfred Trotter: *Herd Instinct and its Bearing on the Psychology of Civilised Man*. *Sociological Review*, July, 1908. (P. 19 of reprint.)

marked stupidity. A further reason for this is that some one under the sway of strongly affective influences thinks not only that any one differing from him must be deficient in reasoning power, but also that the views of the latter are themselves stupid. In attempting to controvert these, therefore, he unconsciously distorts them until they really are foolish, and he then finds it easy to demolish them. Any man of the period who read only the account of Darwin's views that was promulgated by his theological and scientific opponents must have wondered why it was worth while to attack such obvious nonsense, while our wonder, on the other hand, is that reputable and otherwise intelligent men could have managed so to pervert and misunderstand statements that to us are lucidity itself. Similarly at the present time if some of the remarkable accounts of Freud's views that are given by his opponents represented anything like what he really holds, the fact would need much explanation that so many scientific men can accept them and yet remain sane.

Yet this astonishing stupidity in apprehending the arguments of opponents, and in defending preconceived views, is only apparent. The men who so grossly misinterpreted Darwin were often men of the highest intellectual power, and the same is true of many of Freud's opponents; similarly no one can read closely the *Malleus Maleficarum* without admiration for the amazing intellectual ingenuity with which the most fantastic propositions are there defended. The process is one that psychiatrists call "emotional stupidity," a symptom seen in patients who have no real defect of reasoning power, but who through various affective influences are in a condition that at first sight gives rise to a strong suspicion of some organic defect of the brain.

On observing the general attitude towards people whose "emotional stupidity" has in the course of time become apparent, two things are noticeable. In the first place, as was remarked above, the fault is attributed much more to intellectual inferiority than to the more important affective causes. Hence the present day supercilious pity for the scholastics of the "dark ages," an attitude considerably modified by an objective comparison of the reasoning powers characteristic of the two civilizations. In the second place, far greater leniency is shown towards a stupidity that expressed itself in the form of blind adherence to accepted errors, than that which expressed itself in the form of blind rejection of a novel truth; in other words, credulousness is always more harshly judged than incredulousness, though they are both merely different aspects of the same fundamental failing.

namely, lack of true scepticism. Yet the one is hardly more characteristic of human weakness than the other—as Nietzsche put it: “Mankind has a bad ear for new music”—and it would be hard to convince a student of human progress that the first manifestation has a greater retarding influence on this than the second. In any case these considerations go to show the fallacy of the popular belief that the will is the servant of reason, the truth being that reason has always been, and probably always must be, only the handmaid of the will.

XI. SUMMARY

Only a small part of the subject matter dealt with by Freud has been covered in the present paper. Those interested are referred to his book for richer and more numerous examples, and for the lucid and penetrating discussion there given of the theoretical aspects of the subject. It is perhaps desirable, however, to summarize here the main conclusions on the topics discussed above.

The occurrences that form the subject-matter of this study, the general characteristics of which were defined in the introductory section,¹ may be divided into motor and sensory.² The defects of the former class that enter into consideration are two, (1) the erroneous carrying out of an intended purpose (slips of the tongue and pen, erroneously carried out actions), and (2) the carrying out of an unintended purpose (symptomatic acts). The defects of the latter class are also two, (1) simple failure of perception (forgetting, not seeing), and (2) erroneous perception (false recollection, false visual perception). In each class the distinction between the two kinds of defects is not sharp; thus in the latter one, for instance, a failure to remember is always accompanied by an over-prominent remembrance of some associated memory, a false recollection. Further, the distinction between the two classes themselves is not a sharp one, both motor and sensory processes playing a part in many instances; thus in the mislaying of objects, the object is first misplaced, and then the memory of the act is forgotten.

Common to all forms is the fact that the subject, and most observers, either give an obviously inadequate explanation of the particular occurrence, such as that it was due to “inattention,” “absent-mindedness,” “chance,” and so on, or

¹In Germany the erroneousness of the process is conveniently indicated by the preface “ver”; thus, verdrucken, vergessen, vergreifen, verlegen, verlesen, verschreiben, versehen, versprechen, etc.

²This term is here used in its neuro-biological sense, and hence includes perceptive and apperceptive processes.

frankly maintain that it has no explanation at all. On the contrary psycho-analysis shows that there is not only a definite psychical cause for the occurrence, but that this has always a logical meaning, and may strictly be called a motive. This motive is some secondary tendency or train of thought, of which the subject is not aware at the time. Usually it is fore-conscious, or, in popular language, unconscious; in many cases it is unconscious in the strict sense, and is then correspondingly more difficult to reveal. In most cases there are both a fore-conscious and unconscious motive, which are associated with each other. The motive is repressed by the subject, the repression being a defence-mechanism that subserves the function of keeping from consciousness undesirable or painful thoughts. The motive may be one of two kinds: either it is a counter-impulse (*Legenwillen*) directed immediately against the mental operation that is intended, or it is an impulse directed against some mental tendency that stands in associative connection with this operation; that is to say, the association between the two mental processes may be either intrinsic or extrinsic. As a result of the repression any direct manifestation of the tendency is inhibited, and it can come to expression only as a parasitic process engrafted on another, conscious one. The disturbance thus caused constitutes a temporary failure or error of normal mental functioning.

This error can psychologically be compared with a psycho-neurotic symptom, the mechanisms by which the two are brought about are almost the same, and the psychical material that is the source of them is closely similar in the two cases. It is maintained that appreciation of the significance of these everyday errors is important for both the practice and theory of psychology; this is especially so in the contribution it furnishes to the problem of psychical determinism, and in the understanding it gives to the deeper, non-conscious motives of conduct. It further throws a valuable light on certain social problems, notably the question of mutual misunderstandings in everyday life, and on the importance of affective influences in forming decisions and judgments.